

Senate, April 14, 1998. The Committee on Finance, Revenue and Bonding reported through SEN. LOONEY, 11th DIST., Chairman of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS RELAY SERVICE PROGRAM.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 16-247e of the general statutes, as  
2 amended by section 1 of public act 97-121, is  
3 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu  
4 thereof:

5 (a) In order to ensure the universal  
6 availability of affordable, high quality  
7 telecommunications services to all residents and  
8 businesses throughout the state regardless of  
9 income, disability or location, the department  
10 shall (1) periodically investigate and determine,  
11 after notice and hearing, local service options,  
12 including the definition and components of any  
13 basic telecommunications services, necessary to  
14 achieve universal service and meet customer needs;  
15 and (2) establish [a lifeline program] LIFELINE  
16 AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS RELAY SERVICE PROGRAMS  
17 funded by all telecommunications carriers that  
18 provide intrastate telecommunications services, as  
19 such terms are defined in 47 USC 153, as amended  
20 from time to time, sufficient to provide  
21 low-income households or individuals with a level  
22 of telecommunications service or package of

23 telecommunications services that supports  
24 participation in the economy and society of the  
25 state. The department shall apportion the funding  
26 for the lifeline program among telecommunications  
27 carriers on an equitable basis based on the gross  
28 revenues of each telecommunications carrier that  
29 are generated in Connecticut, both interstate and  
30 intrastate. The lifeline [program] AND  
31 TELECOMMUNICATIONS RELAY SERVICE PROGRAMS shall be  
32 administered by an entity authorized, and subject  
33 to oversight, by the department. The department  
34 shall determine by order which customers qualify  
35 for the lifeline program. Recipients of lifeline  
36 funds shall use such funds to pay for  
37 telecommunications services provided by any  
38 telecommunications carrier.

39 (b) The department may, if necessary,  
40 establish a universal service program, funded by  
41 all telecommunications companies or users in the  
42 state on an equitable basis, as determined by the  
43 department, to ensure the universal availability  
44 of affordable, high quality basic  
45 telecommunications services to all residents and  
46 businesses throughout the state regardless of  
47 location. Any funds contributed to a universal  
48 service program shall be used to support the  
49 availability of basic telecommunications services  
50 provided by any telecommunications company in a  
51 manner to be determined by the department.

52 ET COMMITTEE VOTE: YEA 16 NAY 0 JF C/R FIN  
53 FIN COMMITTEE VOTE: YEA 42 NAY 0 JF

\* \* \* \* \*

"THE FOLLOWING FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT AND BILL ANALYSIS ARE PREPARED FOR THE BENEFIT OF MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, SOLELY FOR PURPOSES OF INFORMATION, SUMMARIZATION AND EXPLANATION AND DO NOT REPRESENT THE INTENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OR EITHER HOUSE THEREOF FOR ANY PURPOSE."

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**FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT - BILL NUMBER SB 496**

STATE IMPACT	None, see explanation below
MUNICIPAL IMPACT	None
STATE AGENCY(S)	Department of Public Utility Control

**EXPLANATION OF ESTIMATES:**

STATE IMPACT: The Department of Public Utility Control is already implementing the Telecommunications Relay Service Program described in the bill. The agency is currently levying an assessment for the cost of the Program on all telecommunications companies, except those offering cellular phone services.

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**OLR BILL ANALYSIS**

SB 496

**AN ACT CONCERNING THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS RELAY SERVICE**

**SUMMARY:** This bill requires the Department of Public Utility Control to establish a telecommunications relay service (TRS) program, in addition to the existing lifeline program, to provide low-income people with telecommunications services so they may participate in the economy and society of the state. Like the lifeline program, the TRS program must be: (1) funded by all telecommunications carriers that provide intrastate service and (2) administered by an entity authorized and overseen by the department. The bill does not specify the types of services to be provided

under the program. In practice, TRS serves as an intermediary between hearing-impaired people and other telecommunication system users who do not have teletypewriters (TTY) and other specialized equipment.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 1998

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Energy and Technology Committee

Joint Favorable Change of Reference  
Yea 16 Nay 0

Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee

Joint Favorable Report  
Yea 42 Nay 0